

CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

SEPA Threshold Determination
for the
2005 Comprehensive Plan Amendments

Project Sponsor: City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development

Location of Proposal: The amendments would affect the City's Comprehensive Plan, which pertains to the entire City.

BACKGROUND

Proposal Description

The proposal consists of several amendments to the Comprehensive Plan that would add to or amend existing plan text.

Neighborhood Business District Strategy (NBDS)

Expansion of Existing Businesses. The proposed amendment to the Land Use Element will remove language allowing the expansion of existing businesses beyond maximum size limits applicable to new businesses. (See Attachment 1 to the Ordinance.) This change reflects new maximum size limits promulgated under legislation amending the Commercial Chapter of the Land Use Code (Chapter 23.45 SMC) that apply the same maximum size limits to uses whether they are new or already existing. Potential environmental impacts of the NBDS legislation were analyzed under a Decision and Analysis (Determination of Nonsignificance) dated April 7, 2005.

Changes to Accommodate Downtown Portion of Center City Strategy

The Neighborhood Planning Element is amended, including revised goals and policies for Downtown related to the proposed changes to the Downtown Chapter of the Land Use Code (Chapter 23.49 SMC). (See Attachment 2 to the Ordinance.) Potential environmental impacts on Downtown were considered in a Final Environmental Impact Study issued by the Department of Planning and Development on January 6, 2005.

South Wallingford Neighborhood Plan Elements

The proposed amendments add the following new goals and policies applicable to the South Wallingford Neighborhood (See Attachment 3 to the Ordinance.):

- W-P4** Use Wallingford Neighborhood Design Guidelines for reviewing commercial and multi-family development to encourage design that is consistent with the neighborhood's character, while maintaining and promoting a vital business community.

- W-G7** A neighborhood south of N/NE 40th St. which respects the residents' desire for a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood, with strong connections to the Wallingford Urban Village and to public spaces along the shoreline, while maintaining the viability of the existing marine-industrial and commercial activities.
- W-P30** Maintain the shoreline's marine industrial zoning in order to preserve the water-dependent use and the working waterfront character of the Wallingford shoreline.
- W-P31** Provide opportunities for small, pedestrian-oriented businesses in South Wallingford while preserving the economic vitality of existing businesses and opportunities for their reasonable redevelopment.
- W-P32** Pursue opportunities to provide public access between the residential community and the shoreline area.
- W-P33** Strive to preserve existing views of Lake Union and Downtown Seattle from viewpoints and parks.
- W-P34** Control impacts of regional traffic on South Wallingford's residential, commercial and recreational areas.
- W-P35** Work to enhance bicycle and pedestrian access between the upland portion of the neighborhood and the Burke-Gilman Trail and shoreline.

Rainier Beach Residential Urban Village

The Urban Village Element and Urban Village Figure 1 are amended to incorporate areas surrounding the Henderson Street Sound Transit station into the Rainier Beach Residential Urban Village. (See Attachment 4 to the Ordinance.) Any future rezones or redevelopment of the additional areas to be included within the Rainier Beach Residential Urban Village will be subject to appropriate environmental review.

Objective Criteria for Evaluating Urban Village Designations

Amend Urban Village Element policies UV25 and UV 29 to incorporate objective criteria for designating Hub Urban Villages and Residential Urban Villages. (See Attachment 5 to the Ordinance.) The amendments document current criteria established by Council Resolution 29232.

Transportation Element and Transportation Strategic Plan

The Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan is amended to clarify the relationship of the Transportation Strategic Plan to the Comprehensive Plan, and to describe street types and street classifications. (See Attachment 6 to the Ordinance.)

Litter and Graffiti in the Environmental Element

The Environmental Element is amended to add new language regarding litter and graffiti. (See Attachment 7 to the Ordinance.)

Correcting Minor Errors in Urban Village Appendix A

Appendix A to the Urban Village Element is amended to correct minor errors. (See Attachment 8 to the Ordinance.)

ANALYSIS - OVERVIEW

The following describes the analysis conducted to determine if the proposal is likely to have a *probable significant adverse environmental impact*. This threshold determination is based on:

- *the proposal*, as described above and in technical documentation;
- the information contained in the *SEPA checklist*;
- additional information, such as analyses prepared by City staff; and
- the experience of DPD analysts in reviewing similar documents and actions.

ELEMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Adoption of the proposed amendments would result in no immediate significant adverse impacts because the adoption is a non-project action. The discussion below evaluates whether adverse impacts may occur through changes in development patterns brought about by the proposed plan/policy changes. The overall impacts of the Comprehensive Plan, and its effects on projected growth, were already analyzed in an EIS for the 1994 Comprehensive Plan.

Some items listed in the proposal are not ripe for SEPA review at this time, may be exempt from SEPA, and/or generally have no potential to generate significant adverse environmental impacts.

- The adoption of goals and policies for the South Wallingford Neighborhood are not related to any specific development proposals or regulatory actions at this time.
- Incorporation of objective criteria for evaluating Urban Village designations and clarification of the relationship between the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan and the Seattle Department of Transportation's Strategic Plan are procedural actions and contain no substantive changes with respect to use or modification of the environment.
- Similarly, the correction of minor arithmetic errors in Urban Village Appendix A of the Comprehensive Plan will have no substantive effect.

Natural Environment

Earth, Water, Plants, Animals and Fisheries

The proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan would result in no direct impacts related to earth, water resources, plants, animals or fisheries. Possible indirect adverse impact concerns of the proposed changes include the following items.

Rainier Beach Residential Urban Village Boundary Change. If proposed changes lead to increased intensity of future development around the Henderson Street Link Light Rail station through subsequent rezones, overall contribution of water pollutants and runoff volumes from the

site could conceivably increase. Increased development intensity on affected sites could cause more clearing of vegetation, more impervious surface coverage and generation of pollutants through land uses and traffic than previously anticipated. The requirement, however, of drainage control and water quality treatment features in future development, consistent with City and State requirements, would be expected to prevent or minimize potential adverse impacts on natural water resources and habitats.

Neighborhood Business District Strategy. The changes to Land Use Policy 109 remove support for the expansion of existing businesses beyond established size limits so that all businesses, whether new or existing, are subject to the same size limits. The new size limits were subject to an environmental analysis issued by DPD on April 7, 2005. This change to the Comprehensive Plan will have no adverse environmental effect.

No significant adverse long-term cumulative impacts related to the proposed amendments have been identified.

Air Quality

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments would result in no direct impacts related to air quality. Any future projects or regulatory changes that indirectly result from the proposed amendments will be subject to environmental analysis.

Noise

The proposed amendments would result in no direct impacts related to noise. Future site-specific review of development proposals could be required if noise is deemed to be a significant impact concern.

Energy and Natural Resources

The proposed amendments would result in no direct impacts related to energy or natural resources.

Releases of Toxic or Hazardous Materials

The proposed amendments would result in no direct impacts related to toxic or hazardous substances.

Built Environment

Land, Shoreline Use, and Housing

This analysis identifies no significant adverse direct or cumulative impact implications for land use or housing. Future rezones in the Rainier Beach Residential Urban Village that may indirectly result from this proposal could result in higher density housing around the Henderson Street Link Light Rail station. This would increase the intensity of use in ways that could increase spillover effects on nearby properties. However, given its proximity to the light rail station, it is logical to conclude that the proposed urban village designation for these properties

makes sense, and that denser residential presence is actually a positive impact that would allow more residents to use transit and forego automobile use. Future possible rezones would be subject to additional environmental analysis by DPD.

Transportation

The proposed amendments that clarify the relationship between the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan and the SDOT Transportation Strategic Plan will have no substantive effect on the provisions of either plan, and would result in no direct impacts on demands for transportation.

Public Services and Utilities

The proposed amendments would result in no direct impacts on demand for public services and utilities. Future rezones in the Rainier Beach Residential Urban Village will be subject to environmental analysis by DPD.

DECISION

- [X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).
- [] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).

Signature: _____ Date: _____
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